

"IMPRESSIONS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PSYCHOANALYTIC CONGRESS"<sup>1</sup>

Frederick Hacker, M. D.

At this international meeting, it was striking how little American psychoanalytic trends are shared in other countries. The American emphasis on ego psychology contrasted sharply with the more "Kleinian" orientation in other countries, especially in South America. Psychoanalysis in Europe seemed to be either extremely orthodox or tended towards an existential, philosophic approach. Representatives of different points of view seemed willing to "live and let live."

One particularly impressive part of the program was the symposium on Symptom and Character formation. This symposium was built around two previously published papers, "Conflict, Regression, and Symptom Formation" by Jacob Arlow and "Symptom Formation and Character Formation" by Jeanne Lampl-De-Groot.

Dr. Arlow's paper emphasizes that particular symptoms are significant for particular levels of psychosexual development, and that symptoms are compromises between the impulse and its defenses. Lampl-De-Groot's paper points out that conflict is a natural state, and the solutions are due to the synthesizing functions of the ego. Pathology appears when there is a failure of the ego's function of integration.

1. Summary of the first paper presented at the scientific meeting of the Southern California Psychoanalytic Society, September 16, 1963.

Anna Freud pointed out how ego integration may produce conflict, and that defenses, just as important as the drives themselves, are associated with the drives from the beginning, rather than being secondary. There was discussion from several people, including Dr. Hacker, who emphasized the distinction between symptoms and character formation. Character neurosis can be thought of as an asymptomatic solution to painful neurotic symptoms. Anxiety is converted into a neurotic symptom which, with increased internalization and psychological structuralization, is converted into an ego-syntonic character attitude.

Dr. Alexander Rogawski added a summary of a paper presented by Dr. Hacker at the International Congress titled "The Reality of Myth." In this paper, Dr. Hacker points out how individuals create their own mythology, representing the irrational side of man. In the course of his life, man makes new personal myths as they are needed, taking symbols from his current culture. The transference neurosis can be seen as an example of the formation of a personal myth.

John S. Peck, M. D., Reporter